

0 0001 4507510 5

29SE 87 24

23 3 0 00

2A 39 26

14 A 39 22

1 12 00 00

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

14 25 23

0 0 0 0



HOMER MARTIN NORMANDY TREES

LANDSCAPE AND FIGURE PAINTERS OF AMERICA

BY
FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN



NEW YORK
PRIVATELY PRINTED
MCMXVII

Copyright, 1917
by
Frederic Fairchild Sherman

TO MY WIFE
JULIA MUNSON SHERMAN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE LANDSCAPE OF HOMER DODGE MARTIN	3
ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: AN AMERICAN COLORIST	13
BLAKELOCK'S SMALLER LANDSCAPES AND FIGURE-PIECES	23
SOME PAINTINGS BY ALBERT PINKHAM RYDER	33
AN AMERICAN PAINTER OF THE NUDE	43
ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD	51
LANDSCAPE PAINTING	
Nature and Art	61
Paint and Personality	64
The Real and the Unreal	67

ILLUSTRATIONS

HOMER DODGE MARTIN

NORMANDY TREES	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
THE LILY POND	4
THE LONE TREE	4
THE SUN WORSHIPPERS	6

ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN

THE WANDERING MIND	14
MOTHER AND CHILD	16
MAGDALEN	18
GIRL BLOWING BUBBLES	20

RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK

INDIAN MADONNA	24
GOING TO THE SPRING	24
MOONRISE	26
ON THE PLAINS	28
THE WOODLAND ROAD	28

ALBERT PINKHAM RYDER

THE SHEEPFOLD	34
THE FOREST OF ARDEN	34
NOLI ME TANGERE	36
PEGASUS	38

LILLIAN M. GENTH

PAGE

THE FOUNT OF LIFE	44
THE MOUNTAIN STREAM	46
THE SUN MAIDEN	46
SUNLIT DELL	46

ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

AN ARCADIAN HUNTRESS	52
THE WATERS OF OBLIVION	54
THE CITY THAT NEVER WAS	56
SUNSET—MISTS AND SHADOWS	56

WINSLOW HOMER

BLOWN AWAY	62
----------------------	----

ALEXANDER H. WYANT

SKETCH	64
------------------	----

DWIGHT W. TRYON

DAWN	66
----------------	----

J. FRANCIS MURPHY

INDIAN SUMMER	68
-------------------------	----

THE LANDSCAPE OF HOMER
DODGE MARTIN

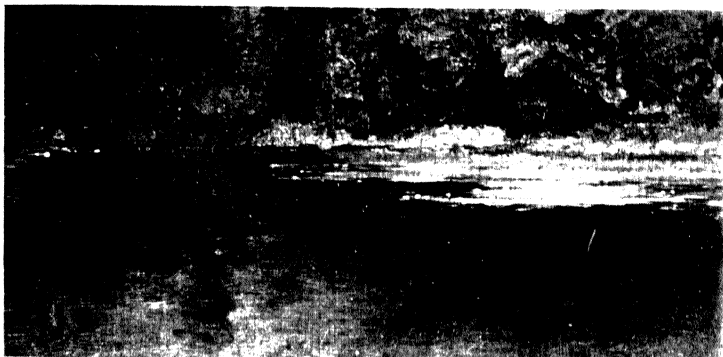
LANDSCAPE AND FIGURE PAINTERS OF AMERICA

THE LANDSCAPE OF HOMER DODGE MARTIN

THE work of no American painter of landscape more certainly requires an intimate acquaintance for its full enjoyment or more fully repays one for a painstaking study of its various manifestations than that of Homer Dodge Martin. Inness, who was unquestionably a greater master, in all the wide range of his product never but once or twice touches one so nearly. Wyant, who was more closely akin temperamentally, touches one oftener though never so nearly nor so deeply. His was also a poetic interpretation of nature notable for its refinement in the same sense as Martin's; his vision, however, was much more limited than either Martin's or Inness's and he was obviously incapable of developing the larger aspects of a theme as they did.

Wyant and Martin were both poets in landscape; Wyant is lyrical, Martin epic in his product. One may prefer the one or the other, but of relative value

of the work of the two there can be no reasonable difference of opinion. Inness and Wyant, the former in a large and the latter in a smaller way, are both emotional painters. Martin is consciously intellectual. He selected his subjects with so comprehensive a knowledge of their adaptability to his needs and with so delicate an appreciation of their possibilities for the expression of his moods that one of his closest friends once said that his finest canvases looked as if no one but God and he had ever seen the places pictured. Wyant and Inness painted more nearly whatever happened to excite their emotion. That the emotions of the latter were of many kinds and those of the former of but few explains the variety in the product of the one that is lacking in that of the other. Wyant's paintings are full of sentiment of a very exquisite sort, tender but too serious ever to even approach sentimentality. Inness's are charged with much stronger feeling but seldom so finely felt if invariably more ably expressed. Indeed, both Wyant and Martin express more successfully the rarer aspects of nature and Inness's pre-eminence rests upon the variety of his achievement and the high average of its excellence rather than upon any superior ability in the matter of expression. Inness is too fully engrossed in the reproduction of the actual appearances of things to bother with their spiritual



HOMER D. MARTIN: THE LILY POND
Collection of Everett Ruess in Sherman



HOMER D. MARTIN: THE LONE TREE
Montclair Museum of Art

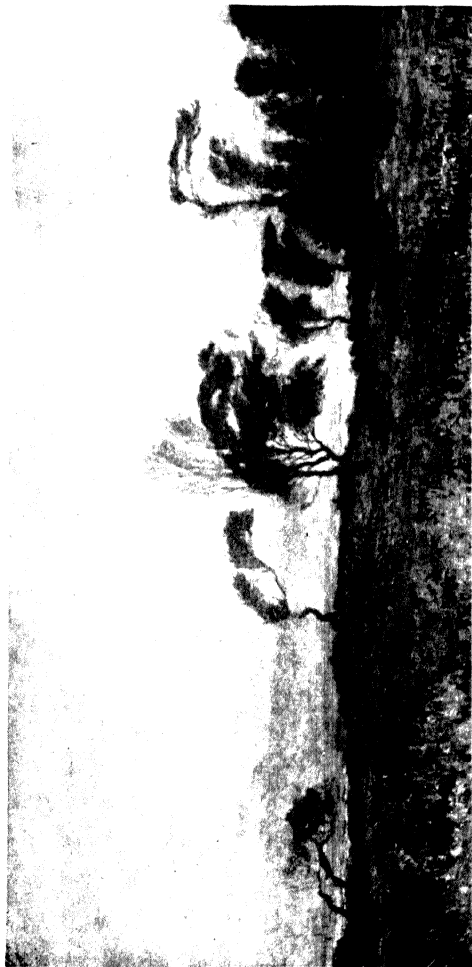
significance, so that, however masterly his pictures of peace or of storm, the full meaning of the scene is seldom felt in his rendering of it. Martin on the other hand never fails to make one keenly conscious of the loneliness and utter desolation of certain places nor Wyant of the pensive charm of others. In Inness we admire a wonderful faculty for the presentation, in a large way and with unsurpassed truth, of nature in her many moods, while in Martin and Wyant it is the expression of these varying moods through their interpretations of nature, a much more delicate and difficult accomplishment, that impresses us most forcibly.

That you will find the figure in many of Inness's finest canvases, admirably placed and beautifully suggested, while it practically never appears in the pictures of Martin or Wyant, signifies nothing if not that Inness felt the need of it as they never did in the rendering of pure landscape. Wyant often introduced cattle and sheep in his compositions, but Martin practically never did and in the best of him one will find no living thing to divert howsoever slightly one's attention from whatever mood is expressed or to detract in the least from the feelings it is sure to arouse.

To Homer Martin the look of the land with its accompaniment of sky was sufficiently expressive to make the addition of anything extraneous unnec-

essary to an adequate realization of the spirit of a place and a full rendering of its suggestion either of peace, loneliness, gladness, desolation or whatever motive its particular aspect might embody. While it is true that he includes in some of his most important canvases a deserted house, an ivy-covered church, a light by the sea, it will be noted that they are very much a part of the landscape in every instance as well as expressive in themselves of the very moods embodied in the scenes of which they are a part. Martin is at his best, however, in such works as *The Sun Worshippers*, *Ontario Sand Dunes*, *Westchester Hills*, *Adirondack Scenery*, and the others that are landscapes pure and simple, in which is no visible evidence of man or of man's work. There are no finer interpretations of the moods of nature in the whole of American landscape art and their sentiment is inescapable.

His range in the selection of subject is deliberately restricted as his interest was confined entirely to such themes as offered a satisfactory means for the expression of those moods of nature which corresponded most nearly to his own, and of which his intimate understanding made him a masterly interpreter. He does not attempt difficult performances in oil painting to convince one of his mastery of the medium; in all his product nothing may be found that approaches the dramatic in ac-



HOMER D. MARTIN: THE SUN WORSHIPPERS

ARTIST: HOMER D. MARTIN

tion or intensity, but perhaps no landscape painter has ever expressed such depth of feeling as is evident in his finest works; and one will look far to find anything finer in the way of mere painting than certain pictures of his like *The Harp of the Winds* or *The Sun Worshippers*.

One realizes in Martin's handling of a subject an unerring instinct for the inevitable evidenced in just such a proportionate sacrifice of unnecessary detail and personal viewpoint as emphasizes properly its particular significance. In several of his subjects, of which there are variations executed at considerable intervals, such as the *Sand Dunes*, *Lake Sanford* and the *Adirondack Scenery*, which undoubtedly derives from the *Headwaters of the Hudson*, this process of elimination and refinement, the calculated cutting away of insistent trivialities and insistence upon the primitive and elemental meanings of the landscape, is patent.

I think one may find, without great effort, suggestions in Martin's work of his predilection for poetry and music and his reaction to the best of both, for certainly if the *Harp of the Winds* is not musical you will find no music in landscape art any more than you will find poetry there if not in the *Old Manor House*. His *Andante: Fifth Symphony*, painted with the exquisite strain of that air ringing in his ears, is a notable evidence of his

cultivated taste in music, the like of which is not to be found elsewhere in landscape painting, and it is surely not presumptuous to assume in other canvases intimations of poetic origin; at any rate, it is impossible to look upon certain of his masterpieces without a new understanding of that love for the odes of Keats which led him sometimes to recite them, so truly do we feel the haunting melancholy of that immortal verse in his work.

Not many artists among his contemporaries were equally cultivated, and it is interesting to note that La Farge, who was the most distinguished of those that were, was one of Martin's few friends. That the small talk of the studios had no interest for him is the only possible explanation of his lack of comrades in them, for he was a man whom men especially found lovable. I imagine much of the time his fellow artists spent together in the discussion of the problems of oil painting Martin must have spent steeping himself in thoughts that are too deep for words, pondering the memories of half-forgotten airs or "soaking in" the beauty of some immortal verse, and this difference in the use to which he put his idle moments is plainly to be seen, I think, in the kind of thing one finds in his pictures—not fine painting for its own sake, spectacular scenery for the sake of effect, or dramatic skies; not improvisations in color nor interesting studies

in chiaroscuro, but certain inescapable intimations of the important fact that “the poetry of earth is never dead.”

ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: AN
AMERICAN COLORIST

ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: AN AMERICAN COLORIST

ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1827 and went with his parents to Tennessee when he was eleven years old. His family must have been reasonably well-to-do people at the time, for it is recorded that as a youth he read a great deal about art. He probably painted some, too, for when he was but twenty-three he went to Europe with the intention of studying at Düsseldorf. He stopped, however, in Paris instead, and entered the atelier of Thomas Couture, where he remained but a few months. This was all the instruction in art he ever received. After returning to his home in Tennessee he made a second trip to Paris in 1854, and it was then that he made the acquaintance of William M. Hunt, who in turn introduced the young artist to Millet.

To Newman belongs the credit of having been one of the earliest to appreciate as well as one of the first to purchase Millet's work. He bought *Le Vanneur* and several other canvases, which he later sold, through necessity, certainly not from

choice, as they must have been the most prized of his possessions, as one will infer from even a slight familiarity with Newman's own work, in which not a little of the sentiment as well as the best of the color reveals a remarkable sympathy with that which is inevitably associated with the art of the great Frenchman. This does not imply that Newman's painting is anything other than individual and delightful in its own way, which it certainly is, but in a measure it helps to indicate what tendencies determined the development of his art, what his ideals really were and how nearly he eventually succeeded in realizing them in his canvases.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Newman was employed by the Confederate Government as a draughtsman and in 1864 he saw some active service as a member of the 16th Virginia Infantry. How true it is that he is exclusively an idealist and a painter of ideas, interested only in some personal and rare interpretation of religion, history or life, or some original creation of his own imagination, may be gathered from the fact that there is no record in his art of his ever having been to Paris nor yet of his ever having been a soldier.

For years after the surrender of Lee left him free to return again to his easel he worked in a comparative obscurity that we must presume was any-



ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: THE WANDERING MIND

Collection of the late Sir William Van Horne, Montreal

thing but unsatisfactory to one of his naturally retiring dispositions, especially as his pictures were highly esteemed by a few men and women of cultivation and taste who quietly collected them during all this time. The interest and encouragement of such purchasers as came to take away his canvases, fellow craftsmen like Wyatt Eaton and William M. Chase, literary celebrities like Richard Watson Gilder, and connoisseurs like Sir William Van Horne and Thomas B. Clarke must have meant infinitely more to him than the popular approval of a general public that was satisfied with the landscape of the Hudson River School and the figure paintings of J. G. Brown.

Not until 1894, when he was sixty-seven years old, was any public exhibition of Newman's work ever held. At that time a collection of upward of a hundred of his paintings, mostly loaned for the occasion, was arranged by a committee of the artist's friends and hung in a New York gallery. That he was practically unknown at the time even in the city where he lived and worked is evident from the statement in the *Evening Post's* account of the exhibition, that "his works are never seen in the art galleries, nor yet in the sales which occur at frequent intervals." The *Post* and the *Tribune*, both of which reviewed the exhibition at length, speak highly of the artist particularly as a colorist, the

latter, in mentioning a hunting scene and a religious subject, saying that "in pictures like these Mr. Newman is one of the haunting masters of color." From a report published in the *Times* about a week after these reviews appeared, we learn that the pictures "are finding favor with buyers," which probably means that several were sold besides the one which the newspaper report adds was purchased by the painter, Alexander Harrison. From the date of this exhibition, which was perhaps the great event in Newman's quiet life, until that March day in 1912 when he was found dead in his studio in New York, he seemingly never again emerged from the utter obscurity in which he lived, and in his old age, as in his youth, it was the loyalty and help of a few true friends and discerning judges of painting that enabled him to purchase the necessities of a life of singular devotion to a fine ideal in art that has never been rightly estimated or properly appreciated.

That Newman was a great colorist in the best sense is evident in all of his finished work, and few who are acquainted with it would agree, I think, with the critic who wrote that "you feel that his imaginative conceptions were arrested on their way into concrete images by a flow of light and color too bewitching to let the constructive faculty of the artist have free play," for certainly the "obscurity



ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: MOTHER AND CHILD

in details," which this critic remarks, is nothing if not deliberate, a conscious sacrifice of definition in particulars for the perfect realization of that mysterious and poetic charm of color which is their chief delight. His color has a loveliness entirely due to spontaneous feeling, and in many of the presumably so-called obscure canvases it is developed with all the loving and painstaking care that another artist might have lavished on the drawing of a figure, and simply because he realized that it was a surer means for the expression of what he had to say than any further development of the more obvious detail could be. In some of his canvases the very indefiniteness of the no less necessary detail is readily recognized as being a condition inevitable to their success, inasmuch as their intention is the suggestion of some elusive sentiment or an expression of feeling rather than any actual representation of the reality of things, however lovely.

In all his pictures it is the poetry of color and of life rather than the prose that one finds, and in the sense that poetry is the higher form of expression it may be said that he is a greater artist than some of his contemporaries who are unquestionably superior painters. However much of a poet Newman is, it is quite true that he is never the master of the poetry of art that Millet is of the prose. Millet's prose is generally perfect in a way that New-

man's poetry often is not, and yet the imperfect beauty of much of Newman's painting has a very real charm. It is an elusive charm, though, and is easily missed unless one is peculiarly sensitive to the sensations of color and to the suggestion of forms used merely as symbols in a manner of expression somewhat similar to that of not a little of the sculpture of Rodin. A representative example of this phase of Newman's work is the little picture, in the collection of the late Sir William Van Horne, called *The Wandering Mind*, where the figure, though crudely drawn, is a most suggestive as well as an entirely adequate interpretation of a vitally interesting idea. Further development of the detail in this canvas, or indeed anything in the way of more finished drawing, could hardly add at all to the tragic force of the picture as it stands. One might suppose that the character of the subject in this instance partly, if not wholly, accounts for the success of the painting, and it is quite true that there is something in the association of ideas that makes the awkward figure peculiarly suggestive and appropriate. There are other works by Newman, however, where the detail is quite as obscure and the drawing quite as crude, that are just as forcible in their presentation of other and less unhappy subjects. The small *Magdalen* in the same collection is one of them. The artist has painted her praying,



ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: MAGDALEN

Collection of the late Sir William Van Horne, Montreal

and it is the pose that makes the picture, as an artist would say. And yet here, as in the other canvas, an unusual but no less beautiful and suggestive color scheme is a powerful factor first and last in the effectiveness of what is a spiritual or imaginative rather than an actual and realistic interpretation.

The picture of the Mother and Child, one of his last works, dated 1902, proves that he was an accomplished draughtsman and an intelligent technician in other ways when it suited his purpose. This canvas is as fine a representation of a subject so often painted as one will be likely to find in modern art. The figures are very happily arranged and the expression in the faces is so finely felt and expressed that the entire poem of the mother's love and the child's response is fully evident; while the golden curls and rosy cheeks of the baby against the black hair and cooler tones of the mother's face emphasize that charm of color which, like a lovely music, is the accompaniment to this song of life. The canvas is as exquisitely finished as are some of those rare figures of Rodin's which exhibit a similar though perhaps greater degree of technical proficiency in a sculptor, who quite as generally, for the sake of emphasizing the ideas he wishes to express, is accustomed to neglect many if not all of the little niceties of art.

In the Girl Blowing Bubbles it is again alto-

gether an unusual and interesting color scheme that emphasizes the idea of mystery which is suggested by the enveloping shadows and the inarticulate curiosity of the watching dogs. This is a finished work of art, in that it is a finished piece of rich and satisfying color; the figure of the child, the green-covered couch on which she rests her hand and the two dogs are merely sketched in sufficiently to serve as notes in an exquisite color harmony, which is at once attractive to the last degree and highly expressive. To have insisted upon the drawing could hardly have added to the beauty of the canvas and, one feels, might have resulted in the sacrifice of much of its charm.



ROBERT LOFTIN NEWMAN: GIRL BLOWING BUBBLES

**BLAKELOCK'S SMALLER LANDSCAPES
AND FIGURE-PIECES**

BLAKELOCK'S SMALLER LANDSCAPES AND FIGURE-PIECES

A LARGE majority of the best of Blakelock's paintings are those of the smallest dimensions. As yet these masterpieces in miniature have never received the attention they deserve. If, as seems probable, he preferred and worked more naturally and therefore more effectively in a small area, in much the same sense as we may say that Inness worked in the compass of a canvas thirty by forty-five inches, it is surely necessary for us to know these little pictures if we are ever to appreciate fully his abilities. They will acquaint us with capabilities that his great canvases like the Pipe Dance, the Indian Encampment and the several large Moonlights have not already made familiar. The faultless drawing and the fine characterization in the Indian Girl and Shooting the Arrow will be a revelation to many, as will also the exquisite enamel-like quality of color and of finish in a work like the Girl with the Fan.

Shooting the Arrow is a poetic interpretation of a phase of primitive life in America that has passed

away forever. The arrangement of the lighting is very notable. The Indian brave, clothed only in his loin-cloth and poised, with bow half-drawn, in the full glow of the setting sun, stands out in high relief against the shadowed darkness of the surrounding forest, like a bit of Wedgwood done in the colors of life—a typical and unforgettable figure from an heroic past. The Indian Girl presents another phase of primitive life with similar success. Sitting on her heels in a characteristic attitude and with one hand playing with a string of beads, she is an almost perfect piece of idealism, preserving the pensive charm and unstudied grace of Indian girlhood. The feather in her hair, the fillet about her forehead and her robe of soft tanned skin ornamented with beadwork, the deer-skin spread upon the ground and the trinket in her lap are all beautifully indicated, while the personal element of her own individuality is present and evident in a degree unique to the artistic creation of genius.

The Indian Madonna in the collection of Mr. George S. Palmer, illustrates just as forcibly Blake-lock's ability as a figure painter. Here the composition is so simple that the almost monumental dignity of design in the little group of the girl and her baby is apt to be overlooked. The artist's admirable restraint and mastery of line are evident, and in addition a technical method exactly adapted to the



R. A. BLAKELOCK: GOING TO THE SPRING



R. A. BLAKELOCK: INDIAN, MUJONA
Chiriquí, Panamá, July 1907

perfect rendering of a subject of this character on a canvas of this size. It is, indeed, continually surprising in these smaller pictures of Blakelock's to note how admirably suited his method in every instance is to the character of the subject portrayed, a fact which is not always true of the larger canvases, as one will gather from looking at even so fine an example as the Pipe Dance. This large picture is one of his most famous works and rightly so, for though it is a failure in some ways it is a splendid failure, and in other ways it is a grand success. In it, if anywhere in American art, you may read something of the epic of our native Indian and you will look in vain elsewhere for its like in our art so far as the heroic cast of the composition is concerned.

A picture that comes from the collection of the late Dr. Charles M. Kurtz, formerly Director of the Buffalo Museum, is *Going to the Spring*. This young girl going to fill her jar with fresh water, performing a common daily task, translates one of the prosaic duties of life into poetry no less noble because of its homely human origin. She is as graceful in her movement as a Tanagra figure and with the added interest for us of being seen in her natural surroundings.

Blakelock is the only American painter who has adequately rendered on canvas Indian life in this

country as it was prior to the final wars, the removal of the Indians to the reservations and their change from savage dress and customs to those of our civilization. For this reason if for no other a considerable part of his production can never be a negligible contribution to American art. Its evident historic interest and importance is sufficiently great to preserve all of the pictures that present this phase of his work. Of his landscapes and moonlights there is but little doubt that the unimportant examples will cease to interest our collectors as they become familiar with the somewhat limited number of really fine ones. Of examples of large size, sixteen by twenty-four inches or over, there are relatively few of the first quality. It is apparent therefore that there is a position of importance in our public and private collections awaiting his master-pieces in miniature and that that man will be fortunate indeed who may possess one or two of the best of them.

It has been said and truly that "Blakelock's talent was a talent of pure gold—but a small one." It would seem that in the elaboration of some of his larger pictures he had often to hammer it very thin, producing a pretty piece of painting that is not convincing, or to mix it with a baser metal, producing perhaps a noble canvas like the *Pipe Dance*, which is a quite atrocious piece of painting. This is not



RAVINE ALBERT R. K. 1900. - MONTANA

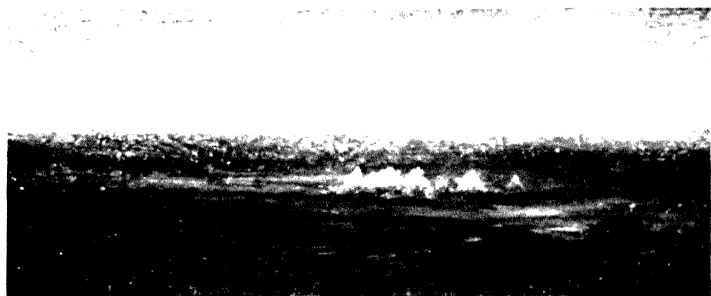
true of his smaller pictures. They glow with all the richness of pure color and they satisfy one as only the gold of genius unalloyed ever can or will. The space is sufficient for the composition and the composition fills the space; there are no uninteresting passages, no empty spaces, nor are there any that are crowded with unnecessary and meaningless detail. Each is a simple, direct statement in brief of some single beautiful thought, some one fine emotion, or if but an impression yet one that is nevertheless full of suggestion.

The Moonrise, reproduced herewith from a photograph that admirably reveals the characteristic detail in a painting that is so dark in tone as to require specially good lighting to be properly seen at all, is a memorable piece of the pure poetry of night with just that touch of light withal that makes of it a thing of magic like the moonlit night itself. Furthermore it is a distinguished composition, the subtle gradation from dark to light inevitably leading the eye into the picture and emphasizing the beauty that is there. It shows, through a tangle of woodland trees, between two huge boulders, the first glow of the rising moon across an expanse of quiet water. This little panel together with many other of the masterpieces of American landscape was formerly in the collection of Mr. Thomas B. Clarke.

Of the great Moonlight, now in the Toledo Museum, probably the earliest version was the little painting (No. 15 of the sale), six by eight inches, formerly with the Toledo canvas in Mr. Catholina Lambert's collection. The late Mr. John N. Andrews owned another and in the William M. Laffan collection there was a fourth, thirty-five and a quarter by fifty-five inches, engraved by S. G. Putnam, and published (1887) in the book of "Engravings on Wood" by members of the Society of American Wood Engravers.

The Golden Afternoon is a composition that the artist repeated many times with but little variation upon larger canvases and seldom with anything comparable to the sumptuous beauty of its rendering in this instance. Generally in the bigger pictures the necessity of an emphasis in the breaking up of the line of the horizon, by the introduction of more trees at intervals not always happily chosen, disturbs the balance of the composition and ruins its effect; while the greater area of sky requiring a diversity of interest to save it from monotony is robbed of much of the beauty and richness as well as all of the simplicity it has here.

On the Plains exhibits in a space but four and one-quarter by nine and one-eighth inches an expanse of prairie that successfully impresses the spectator with a true sense of its vastness. Further, this



RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK: ON THE PLAINS



RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK: THE WOODLAND ROAD

Collection of Mr. John F. Degener, Jr.

tiny canvas illustrates the artist's manner of making a picture out of the simplest material. Here a foreground of flat, uninteresting country, a group of Indian tepees in the middle distance and a bit of cloudy sky are transformed by the magic of mere paint into a poem of the prairies in which their immensity as well as that sense of loneliness that pervades it finds complete expression.

An interesting example of a little-known phase of Blakelock's work is *The Woodland Road* owned by Mr. John F. Degener. In this canvas the color scheme is confined entirely to a range of greens with which he manages a most engaging and at the same time very precise, if not quite literal, interpretation of nature. The painting was but recently seen in the benefit exhibition in New York and introduced a practically unknown expression of Blakelock's ability as a landscape artist. In it one realizes a vigorous response to the actual aspect of the natural world evidenced by masterly draughtsmanship, together with a sensitive recreation of atmospheric envelopment that accounts for much of the basis of truth upon which he built the lasting beauty of those purely imaginative pictures like the Toledo Museum *Moonlight* and the Autumn at the Buffalo Museum which are more truly representative because more evidently characteristic. This woodland interior, however, may almost be said to rank

with the greatest of any school or period. The drawing of the trees at least reveals a knowledge of their anatomy that rivals that of Rousseau and the recognized masters. Its real charm, though, has little or nothing to do with drawing or with fact. It is inherent rather in the sense of sylvan solitude it so subtly conveys—a suggestion as of the leafy haunts of fairy folk far hidden from the ways of men.

**SOME PAINTINGS BY ALBERT
PINKHAM RYDER**

SOME PAINTINGS BY ALBERT PINKHAM RYDER

ALBERT RYDER'S color and the way in which he uses it is a calculable quantity in the genesis of his paintings just as truly as are either his conceptions or the designs in which they are embodied. One may estimate quite accurately its actual value in relation to the total effect produced by any and every picture he has painted, though of course it cannot be mathematically stated. Whether the picture is thoroughly synthetic in its subtle harmonization of delicate shades and values or whether it be simply a masterly piece of design, as is sometimes the case, the color itself, though in the former instance entirely neutral in effect, and in the latter seemingly as negligible as that of a silhouette, is always an appreciable equation adding interest or meaning to the composition. His color simply as color embroiders his imaginations with rhymes as perfect as the rhythm of his line, and though a less important contribution to the poetry of his product than the design, in the sense that, one may say, rhyme is not a necessary part of poetry

in that some of the noblest is written in blank verse, it is yet a means of informing it with an added loveliness.

Mr. Hunecker in one of his brilliant essays has spoken of that quality of the old masters of Italy which Ryder's color suggests at times, and if I remember aright added that the artist deliberately sought in his own manner to emulate the beautiful coloring that adds distinction to their works. He must have been consciously trying to work out a more satisfactory approximation to their customary habit when he undertook the little panel now in the Brooklyn Museum representing a lady, full length, in a landscape, which is seemingly done entirely over a background of gold. In a similar method he painted two panels of a three-fold screen for the late William M. Laffan which has now been broken up, these two panels and the center one, by Homer Martin, having been sold separately. The color of the Italian masters, however perfectly suited to the ecstatic elaboration of religious allegory though, is hardly that which harmonizes with our present day visualization of nature or of life, and naturally therefore he never very nearly approaches them. It might have been otherwise had he been of a deeply religious nature, which he was not, or more humanly sympathetic to that hint of divinity within one's self which generally was their inspiration.



ALBERT P. BARNES. THE CAVE OF THE



ALBERT P. RYDER: THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Nevertheless, one of his noblest creations is a religious subject, the Noli Me Tangere, and though it has little or nothing in common with any early picture of the scene, it surpasses most, if not all, of them in an elevation of imaginative mysticism that distinguishes it among the masterpieces of religious art. He has painted the Christ as a suspended spirit visible in human form and clothed in the cerements of the grave, the very color of the flesh emphasizing the impression of the body of one newly arisen from the dead. The old masters pictured His a living presence in this incident, the measurable weight of which is supported by feet firmly set upon the earth. Ryder has succeeded in conveying more convincingly, at least to the world of today, the essential spiritual significance of the scene.

In such a painting as the Marine owned by Mr. Montross the value of the color in a composition notable rather for its design is very evident. It pervades the picture with a glamour as of the night at sea and puts one *en rapport* with this epic of the ocean as surely as the noble rhythm of the line emphasizes the movement of the waves which it inevitably suggests. However little there may be of any resemblance to reality either in color or in drawing in such a canvas, it is no less a penetrating interpretation of the might and majesty of the sea

and, like a vivid dream, more moving than any memory of the ocean is ever likely to be. In the canvas called *The Sheepfold*, recently presented by Mr. Augustus A. Healy to the Brooklyn Museum, it is the pigment again that stamps the painting with the authority of a masterpiece in that it approximates in both color and intensity so nearly the actual effect of the moonlit night, recreating in a magical way the vibrating mystery that constitutes its essential charm. The huddled group of sheep instinctively drawn together by the dark and the lighted window of the farmhouse near by indicating the gathering of the family therein, give the picture an extra human interest and lend it a meaning associated with life that brings its beauty home to all. The poetry of the moonlight, the shadows of the trees against the glowing skies, the silence and the solitude of the night, it is reasonable to say are made evident to all by this vital human touch.

Ryder's astonishing ability as a draughtsman, his unerring instinct for the very lines of truth in drawing horses, sheep and other animals as well as domestic fowls and birds, is seen in many canvases in which they are the chief if not the only interest. His horses are as fine as Gericault's and his sheep as fine as Jacque's when he wishes them to be. Nowhere else in art, sculpture or painting, I think, will one find anything more tragically beautiful or more



ALBERT P. RYDER: NOLI ME TANGERE

Collection of Mr. N. E. Montross

poignantly pathetic than his picture of a dead canary. It is a more touching Elegy upon a dead song-bird than one may hope to find in music or in poetry, and it is a matchless piece of drawing and painting besides. Another panel with which I am familiar portrays three sheep so faithfully that a fellow craftsman once hesitated to purchase it because it seemed to him beyond the artist's abilities as a draughtsman.

He could also build up with wonderful verisimilitude scenes of witching splendor like the Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens in the collection of the late Sir William Van Horne or present the very essence of a tale from Chaucer in a painting like the Constance in the same collection. In *The Temple of the Mind* he originated an idea quite as romantic and expressed it just as completely and attractively. Indeed he is notable for his invention as well as for the magical quality of his color—the invention of new incident to inform historic facts and romantic ideas with new interest, as well as the invention of eloquent and attractive compositions in which to embody them. It is just this portion of something that is new in all of his work, the original part of it that is his own creation, that is the measure of his genius and his greatness.

His landscapes are the least successful of his works, and yet even in landscape he has done some

fine things. Like the *Sunset Hour*, though, they are generally those in which the human element is introduced by a single figure or more, and becomes, in reality, the centre of interest however lovely the landscape may be. In practically all of his pictures the human interest is present, and in most of them it is paramount, whatever their magic of mere paint or color, their suggestion of music or of rhyme, of time or of place. It is indeed the vital thing in his art. It informs the most imaginative of his works with meaning so evident as to be almost unmistakable. In the *Forest of Arden* one senses it in the broken limb of the blasted tree repeating the gesture of the cavalier who woos his lady in the foreground, he dwelling upon the beauty of Love's demesne and that dumb finger of earth's dead pointing upward as if to recall the lasting loveliness of Heaven. I do not wish to be misunderstood as implying that Ryder ever consciously attempts to point a moral in a picture or to tell a story, but simply to indicate how truly his work is informed with meaning and pregnant with suggestion—so much so, indeed, that from the best of it one gets an intellectual as well as an emotional pleasure of the highest sort. In the picture of *Pegasus* the figure rides the white winged horse out of the radiant heavens right over the edge of the world, bringing back to us today the message of the gods. What



ALBERT P. RYDER: PEGASUS

matters it if the winged steed is badly drawn in such a picture? Perhaps the spindly legs that would scarcely carry its weight subconsciously emphasize the power of those mighty wings outspread! Invariably almost Ryder sacrifices everything unnecessary to the realization of an idea in his effort to give the fullest and most forcible expression and effectiveness to his pictures. Their interest and their charm sufficiently prove how wisely he chooses between the vital and the ineffectual elements in their composition and execution.

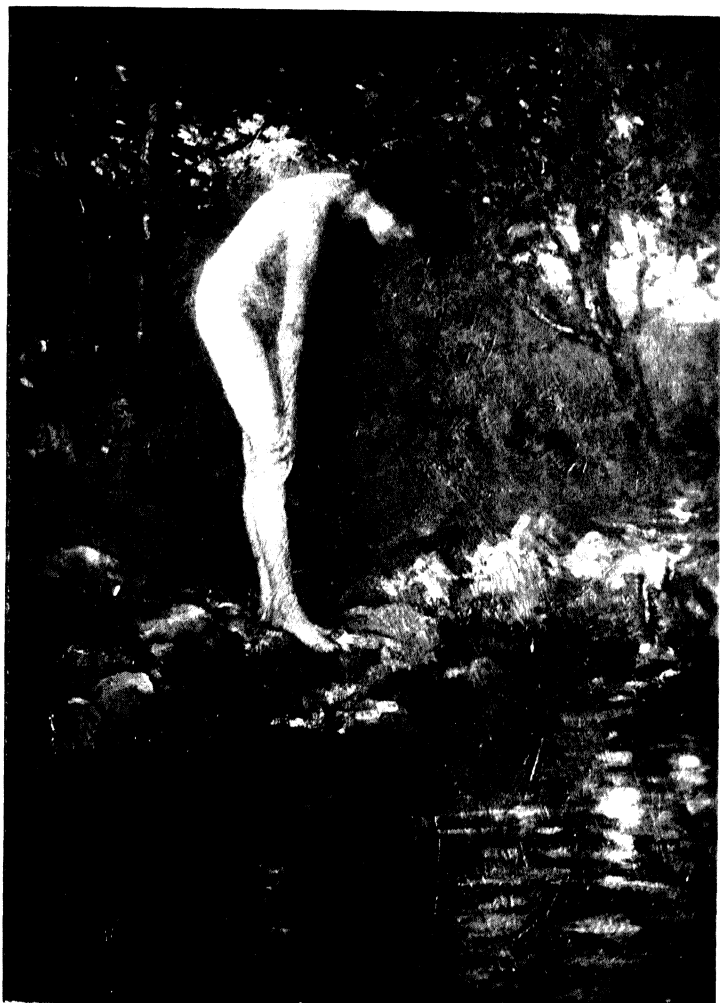
AN AMERICAN PAINTER OF
THE NUDE

AN AMERICAN PAINTER OF THE NUDE

MISS LILLIAN GENTH is, so far as I am aware, the only American artist whose whole career evidences a deliberate effort to earn a reputation as a painter of the nude. Some canvases with draped figures, several portraits and a few intimate landscape studies, undertaken as settings for her nudes, constitute the remainder of her product. In practically all of our great museums and private collections of American paintings, she is represented by a picture of the nude. These paintings have about them a glamour of youth, a healthy vigorous beauty that seldom fails to arrest attention and to reward one for a generous consideration of all that visible portion of it which is realized in the medium. Her choice of models for her figures is confined to the gracious and winning perfection of girlish bodies which she habitually uses merely as symbols in the interpretation of romantic ideas. This gives to her work an inescapable individual character, differentiating it from that of other painters of the nude and indicates its limitations as well as its merits. Whoever delights in the buoy-

ancy of bright color and the suggestion of poetic thought will not fail to find satisfaction in her canvases. Her figures stand forth upon the painted stage of her pictures in a loveliness as altogether removed from reality as the figures that interpret for us in the theatre some Shakespearean scene of wonder and delight.

In the sense, however, that a figure by Degas, Daumier or Millet seems alive, Miss Genth's are generally lifeless. In other words, the figures that people her pictures, faultless though they may be at times in drawing and intriguing as they almost invariably are in their youthful charm, symbolize life but do not live. Of the significance of life as indelibly recorded by nature in its effect upon anatomy, there are no indications in her figures and the absence of it one senses in a definite lack of that modicum of realism that makes of a painted figure a living presence. The tragedy of bent forms and misshapen bodies, the endless drama of the human face, has, as yet, no representation in her work, which more nearly approximates today the popular portrait painters' presentation of personality in its attention to what may be termed the inessentials of feminine prettiness, as to both line and color. To reveal upon canvas by a broken body the tragedy of life or by a face of woe the drama of sinful love is just as possible as to paint pleasant subjects



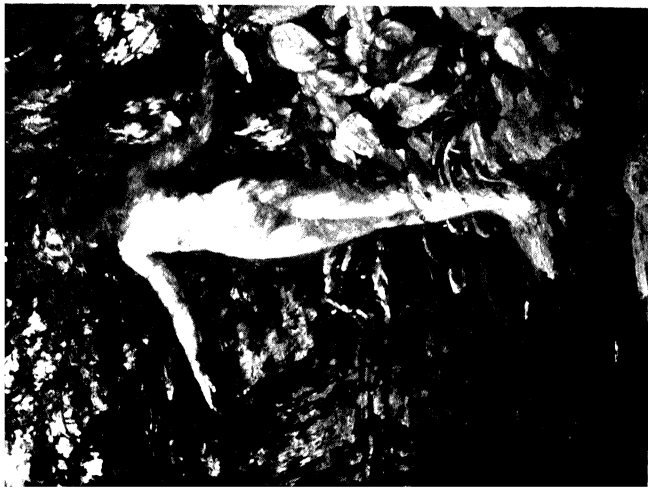
LILLIAN GENTILE: THE FOUNT OF LIFE
Collection of Mr. Marvin Lewis

whose symbolism permits always of happy faces and perfect bodies, and it is infinitely greater art. All of which is not to say that I quarrel with Miss Genth's choice of subject, but merely to suggest a development that I feel reasonably certain must follow in her art if she continues to paint the figure. She is too sensitive to life and too little bound by convention not to feel and to see its rewards and its consequences in figures of sorrow as well as of joy, and to endeavor to picture life, real life, as well as imaginary and invariably lovely fables from life. When that period arrives it will mark another and greater period in her art.

A brilliant technician Miss Genth unquestionably is. The bravura of her brush is evident in all of her paintings, and yet so unerring is her stroke that it may be said never to jeopardize her effects. This may very well be because it does not involve her figures, which are painted with sensible deliberation and extreme care in an effort to draw them to the life, however removed that may be from any approach to realism. As a method of painting I cannot help but feel that a more consistent procedure would produce finer results, for the broad, free way in which her backgrounds are brushed in seems often to emphasize a trifle too strongly that little of something approximating precision with which her figures are painted. She is quick to see the artistic

possibilities in gracious and graceful attitudes whenever and wherever seen and however momentary or unusual, and thus even the most spiritual and imaginative of her nudes preserve in pose a relation to reality that satisfies the eyes, yet does not interrupt the intellectual enjoyment of the poetry of her pictures.

For color as color Miss Genth has an unerring instinct, though without any of that supersensitiveness which would surely have evidenced itself in a more deliberate and careful manipulation of pigment for its own sake, resulting in passages of corresponding subtilty and appeal. The studied effects of the artist improvising with his medium are not to be found in her painting. Both her color and her technic are altogether individual and peculiarly attractive. Her handling of the medium and her brushwork are very personal and always adapted, it would seem, to a specific effort in each instance to reproduce the feeling as well as the appearance of whatever she may be painting, whether earth, sky, water, foliage, figure or flower. Her drawing is not faultless, but oftener than not her color is so intriguing as to make one overlook little inaccuracies there. I do not know of any other contemporary artist who more delicately and successfully recreates upon canvas the shimmering beauty of light, the silvery haze of a Spring day, a Summer blue so



LILLIAN GENTHE: THE SUN MAIDEN
Collection of The Charles Frye



LILLIAN GENTHE: THE MOUNTAIN STREAM
Collection of Mr. McCarthy

soft and lovely or a green of foliage that seems so always tremulous as though the winds of heaven were faintly blowing through the leaves.

The Fount of Life and the Sunlit Dell are two of her finest figure compositions. The former is a picture fragrant with the thought of youth, fascinated by the mystery she cannot fathom, gazing into the quiet waters of the spring of life. The sunlight and the birds, the whispering leaves and the caressing winds are forgotten for the moment while, in this sylvan spot, she searches for the secret hidden in the pool. The latter is more elusive in its intention and escapes exact interpretation except as a matter of feeling that the shadowed dell, the dripping foliage with the sunlight still breaking through so as to touch the receding figure signify youth's first experience of sorrow. In these two canvases and in some others Miss Genth equals her *Adagio* in the National Gallery at Washington, a picture of the nude which she has never surpassed as yet. It is a figure finely drawn and truly enveloped in an atmosphere as charged with the real emotion of the subject as a Summer's breeze is with the fragrance of Summer. As a nude it challenges comparison with the best in American art and takes its place with Benjamin Fitz's *Reflection*, Wyatt Eaton's *Ariadne* and the rest of the few really great ones.

ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

PROBABLY to no two people have colors the same values, and the work of any painter who is, in a particular sense, a colorist, more than that of other artists, is sure to challenge an amount and degree of criticism that can be pretty accurately measured by its importance. And the colorist, like the poet, generally depends upon delicate suggestions and idyllic ideas for the beauties which fill his canvases with visions, as of the gods and goddesses, nymphs and satyrs, temples and shrines, and the wonder of a world made beautiful by imagination. Thus, again, from another point of view, his work suffers from a criticism it can never escape, for to not a few observers the subtle beauties of such painting pass unseen. That "truth is beauty and beauty truth" does not necessarily mean that the obvious are more important than the hidden beauties and truths, though they may reach and satisfy more people. The very fact that the obvious in nature and in life is understood and appreciated so generally, makes it all the more important that the artist concern himself with the elusive glories that

escape the untrained eye and must be lost to the world except for his labor.

But no mere painter, whatever his technical skill, has ever yet or ever will comprehend the secret beauties or truths, either of nature or of life, sufficiently to re-create them upon canvas with that inescapable touch of magic which any painting must have to stir the imagination and satisfy the eyes of them that, having eyes, look inwardly as well as outwardly, and see the glories beyond as clearly as the beauties about us. Genius only is capable of such a task and genius has idiosyncrasies of its own which give to its work individuality, sometimes in literature a style as strange as Whitman's or in painting as weird as Blakelock's. But the work of genius, however touched with madness it may seem, is vital. It moves with splendid rhythm, it sings with a voice of heavenly beauty, it throbs and glows with life!

Mr. Elliott Daingerfield, among contemporary American artists, pursues an ideal which the public imagination very often fails to visualize, and his most poetic conceptions indeed seem to be viewed by the general public as through a glass darkly, however brightly they may glow with that richness of color which at times suggests the old masters. As a young man his work aroused the enthusiasm of so able and discriminating a judge of painting as



George Inness, and his later work won the eager and hearty praise of another great critic of art, John La Farge. Recently, in writing about "Nature vs. Art," Mr. Daingerfield has modestly told a story which goes even farther as an illustration of the point I wish to make in connection with his work, as the remark of the great surgeon which he quotes: "I want a picture of the sea or the mountains seen in a better, finer way than I can see it myself," was intended to explain the satisfaction he found in Mr. Daingerfield's work and illustrates the very real and deep meaning it has for great natures and great minds. Compared with the ability to stir the imaginations and to fill the eyes of such men with revelations of the wonder and the beauty of nature and of life, a popular success, such as might be won by the effort more nearly to gauge one's genius to the understanding of the many, could never bring any real or lasting satisfaction to an artist capable of great things.

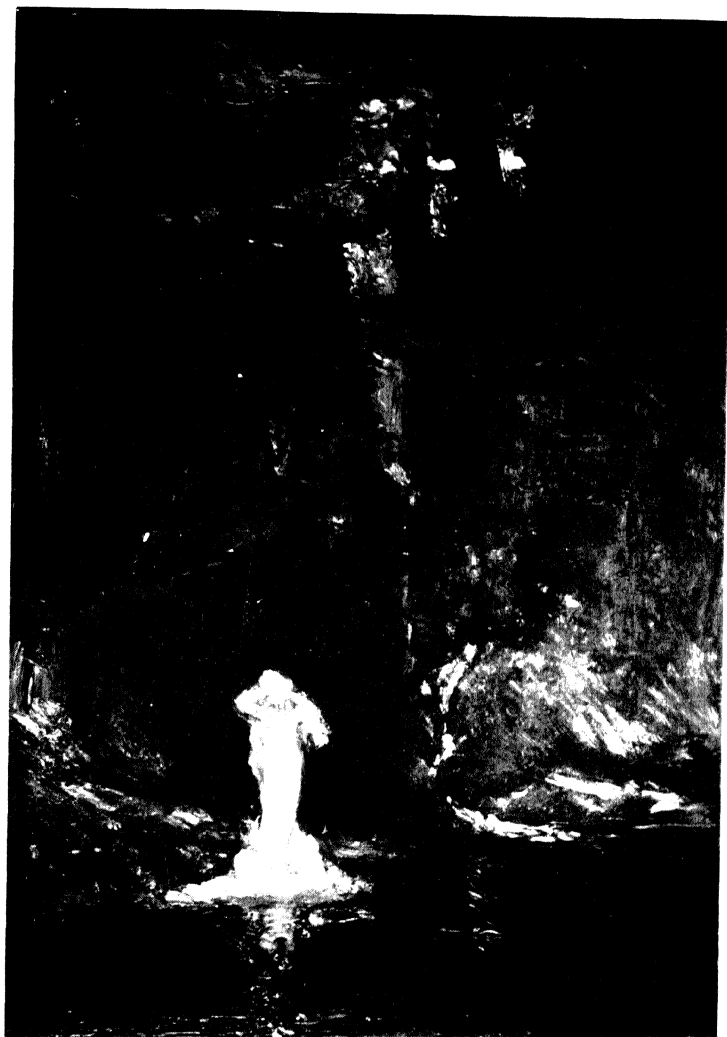
I do not know that any of Mr. Daingerfield's pictures, save one, a Madonna done many years ago, has ever taken a prize in any exhibition. Some of his canvases which have never been entered in competition and seldom shown to the public are, however, among the most poetic conceptions in American art. I should say that their interest as well as their charm, is due to his insight into the glory of

nature and the meaning and the mystery of life—that, and the individuality of his color, its depth and its brilliance.

His landscapes are never mere pictures, for, with all the perfection of their finish, re-creating as they do the sentiment of the place as well as the scene itself, it is the sense of truth that is in them, their meaning I may say, that makes them really vital. And this is because he sees a meaning in our landscape and fixes it in his paintings of it.

With a subtile perfection of emphasis which is estimated very accurately, he fixes in his revelation of it the feeling, the sentiment or the meaning of a landscape; it may be by a shadow or by a touch of light, by a flower or by a figure, or by several figures, either realistic or fanciful. And, after all, the meaning is not invariably obvious but only suggested, as it is in nature itself, and so it often escapes the eyes of the superficial observer, just as it remains undiscovered in the world about us by thousands of unobservant people.

Any one who has seen his painting *The Waters of Oblivion* must realize how without meaning that mysterious and strangely beautiful little landscape would be were it not for the tiny white-robed figure standing before those peaks of night and fairly upon the brink of the unfathomable pool lying at their feet. Except for that touch, with all its miracle



ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD: THE WATERS OF OBLIVION

of rich color, the canvas would be a monstrous thing, not simply unreal but unnatural. Yet as it stands this painting is one of the most vital and most beautiful that I recall by an American artist, and it has an almost inescapable meaning, the whole suggestion of which lives in that little white figure.

Sunset—Mists and Shadows illustrates very forcibly how literally true it is that the lasting loveliness of his most imaginative revelations of the beauty of landscape has its firm foundation in a conscious and just appreciation of the necessity for realizing the actual aspects of a scene sufficiently to be always convincing. However he may enrich with color or with imagination the visible beauty of a scene, its essential individuality is duly emphasized and informs the poetry of his landscape with an inevitable and unmistakable resemblance to the reality of the world in which we live.

A fine example of his offering in the lyric vein is the Arcadian Huntress, in the City Art Museum at St. Louis, a landscape pervaded by a perfume from Parnassus, in which Diana is glimpsed again as in the brave days of old, still following the chase.

Mr. Daingerfield visited the Grand Canyon a few years ago and ever since his first trip thereto it has continued to be the inspiration of many of his most important canvases. Beginning with the approximately realistic rendering of its shimmering

glory in the Opalescent Morning, which turned out to be but a prelude, he developed the motive with the assurance of a great composer improvising upon an enchanting theme and produced that miraculous apotheosis of earthly beauty, the City That Never Was, which is certainly the equal of a fine Turner, as well as the brooding mystery of the moonlit Tower of Silence, that mighty rock in the wilderness standing alone like a monument to a vanished race on the edge of the world.

His paintings of this locality are not literal transcripts of any scene you will see, but marvelous re-creations of the glowing color and the wild grandeur of the place—opal mountains and crimson peaks touched with mists of pearl and of pink and the chasms between brimming with many-colored shadow. He has put into his renderings of it the miracle of color which is the essential glory of the Canyon without sacrifice of necessary truth to nature in his drawing, and the result is that his canvases are full of the poetry as well as the beauty, the wonder as well as the grandeur, of its scenery; and while they impress one with its sublimity they thrill one at the same moment with the joy of its vibrating light and the peace of its shadowed mystery.

In his figure subjects it is the subtle meaning of a gesture, the look on some half-turned face or a



DETROIT DANGEROUS! THE CITY THAT NEVER WAS

Collection of Mr. George S. Palmer



EDDIE DAINGERFELD: SUNSET—MIST AND SHADOWS

pose perhaps that suggests the emotion of the scene; but always his paintings are informed with some motive sufficient to lift them beyond any peradventure of the commonplace.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING

LANDSCAPE PAINTING

NATURE AND ART

THE work of no artist who truthfully reports the facts of nature is negligible. Whatever method he may employ in the accomplishment of that end matters not at all. He may be as literal, as precise in his elucidation of detail as Hobbema, as indefinite as Monet or as preoccupied with the expression of his moods as Tryon, his canvas in any case will be worth while. Whatever its faults, its one conspicuous merit of truth is sufficient to make of it something of real value. It may not satisfy one, it may lack any special distinction either of composition or sentiment, it may express little of the spirit of a place, little of the mood of a moment charged with feeling, nothing of the personality of the painter, but the one thing it does it does truthfully. It holds a mirror up to nature in which we see an accurate reflection.

The sketches in oil of Wyant and the water-colors of Winslow Homer are of this order of things. Dissimilar as they are in method and in style, they each mirror nature in a way almost mi-

raculous. Homer gets his effects with an economy of effort that is wonderful for anything so finished in its finality. Wyant, with loving attention to all the precious detail of his subject, particularizes in his studies the things Homer simply suggests.

There are painters whose best work never goes farther than the studies of such men and who yet must be reckoned with in any consideration of landscape art which pretends to be in any way conclusive. And the ability to produce such work is after all not so common as to seem simply ordinary. I doubt if it ever will be, for it implies a painstaking and serious study of landscape painting and a really admirable knowledge of the various forms of nature and of nature's coloring. An artist with such an equipment is pretty well capable of doing work that is far enough above the average to arrest attention. His trees will be distinguishable—chestnuts, elms, birches, maples; his shrubs and grasses no less, and his pictures of Italy will never look like American landscapes in which Italian shepherds guard their sheep.

Some of the European canvases of even so great a landscape artist as Inness are more American than foreign so far as the landscape itself is concerned—with perhaps no more than a peasant driving his flock, or some women washing clothes in a stream to tell that they are pictures of Italy or of



WINSLOW HOMER: BLOWN AWAY
Copyright © 1994 by The Art Institute of Chicago

France. On the other hand, Wyant's Irish subjects, with nothing but the look of the land to distinguish them by, are unmistakable. This fidelity to the facts of nature in the painting of landscape is of sufficient importance for the absence of it to afford an opening for criticism of a very material sort regarding some of the accepted masterpieces of contemporary artists. It is a too essential part of great landscape art for any painter ever to slight it and produce a truly great picture.

The knowledge of nature's forms and the faithful rendering of them is almost as necessary to the landscape artist as is the knowledge of anatomy to the painter of the nude. Too frequently he tries to work without ever having seriously studied the anatomy of nature. The various tree forms are recognizable in the canvases of comparatively few contemporary painters. And apparently they know the rock formations but little better. It is only the more evident topographical characteristics of a landscape that they seem to get—the sort of thing that could never escape the notice of any one with eyes to see.

Any painter, to embrace that branch of art, ought to go to school to nature—study the trees, the rocks, the earth, and learn to draw and paint their various forms in such a way as shall be distinguishable to others before he hangs out any sign of his pro-

fession in a public place. When he has mastered all this, finished a very thorough schooling in the great out-of-doors, and learned to paint nature as she is, then, even if he fail to express himself through her or to interpret any of her many moods, he will nevertheless be able to add something of real value to landscape art—a truthful picture of nature. Later he may learn to differentiate the essential from the trivial facts, to sacrifice the unnecessary detail for the larger aspects of a scene and, progressing along these lines, arrive finally at some such understanding of nature as will enable him to express some one or more of her many moods in such a way as to produce a really great picture.

PAINT AND PERSONALITY

THE personality of an artist as it affects his art is an interesting study in itself, and if in landscape it is a more elusive quality than in other subjects it is no less effective. Without it many landscapes of unquestioned merit are produced through sheer ability to see and to paint Nature as she is. Often enough the influence of a painter's personality in his art makes for something other than truth. For instance the light in Sorolla's canvases is generally rather artificial than real, more like flame than the sunlight. But the light in the great Spaniard's work is its chief attraction, and it is, one



ALEXANDER H. WYMAN, SEVENTH

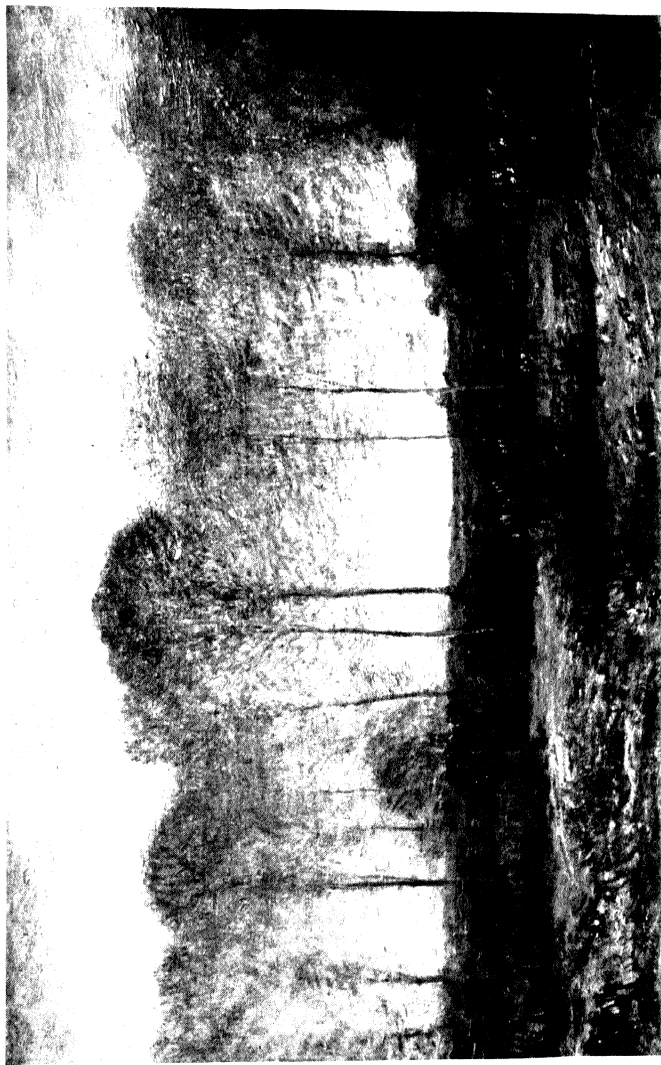
may say, the light of his own personality in as much as it is peculiar to his work. Thus one realizes how the personality of a great artist expressing itself in his work gives to whatever he does a certain quality that distinguishes it from the work of all others just as the "style" of a great author distinguishes his poetry or his prose from that of all others. But only a great author or a great artist may ever be said to have a "style," because none other is ever able to fully express himself, his personality, in his work.

There are many good writers as well as good landscape painters who have no "style" at all; they tell good stories, paint real pictures, but with nothing in the manner of their making to make them memorable, no hint of what joy or sorrow moved the maker's heart nor of the mood that was upon him. They have learned to do their work, to write stories, to paint pictures, but unfortunately not yet how to express themselves in their work—and until they shall they may never achieve a "style" that will distinguish them among even their contemporaries much less, in the future, among the artists of all time.

The dreamy loveliness of Tryon's landscape is never likely to be mistaken for the work of another. It is the expression of too singular a personality. And in all that he does this dreaminess, this thin

strain of minor poetry, is inescapable. It breathes in the budding trees of his Springtime, it blossoms in the stars of his night and it sings in the sunshine of his Summer. It may not satisfy you, may not be food for your thought or light to your path, but unless you are blind surely you can not fail to sense its beauty.

We are much given to thinking and talking about the poetic quality of both Tryon and Francis Murphy, a quality which is unmistakable surely in their landscape but that just as surely is not the vigorous epic poetry of the earth. The poetry in their pictures is mostly their own, a drenching of the fields and the foliage in the sunshine or twilight, the mists or the shadow of their own thought, an interpretation of nature through the atmosphere of their own personality. Their canvases have something more than the simple truth, a faithful rendering of the facts of nature, to recommend them; they shimmer in the light of their creators' thought, fade in the shadows of their moods or sparkle with the splendor of their fancy. Always, however, one is conscious of how inevitable are their limitations, prescribed as they are by the personalities they so charmingly express. As most of us have a bit of poetry in us, the effect of which is to add something of beauty to our understanding of the world in which we live, it is not to be questioned



D. W. TRYON: DAWN
H. O. DE GREEK: LUNAR

that it is less of an accomplishment adequately to express that in one way or another than it is to discover "sermons in stones and books in running brooks." In other words, it is a far more magnificent landscape that expresses the epic poetry of the earth than that sings the song of any artist however great a poet he may be.

There is a lot of feeling in contemporary landscape art, but too much of it is personal feeling and not enough the feeling, the sentiment, the mood of Nature herself. Few artists seem to understand her, as few in proportion as there are men who have any understanding of women, and without a deep understanding of her and of her moods no artist may ever expect to interpret her in the fullest, finest sense—to paint for us a portrait of her in which we shall see not simply a face but a soul.

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

SO much of what is unreal in landscape art is extremely interesting and lovely that one may be pardoned for exaggerating its importance. There is no question but that the artist whose personality pervades his landscape, whose pictures express his moods, produces work more charming and poetic than he whose ability stops at the point of painting simply the visible aspects of a scene. Artistic arrangement in landscape helps an artist to

express what he has to say and helps others to understand him, but however important, however fine, however enchanting his message may be, Nature herself has that to say which is of infinitely greater importance to mankind. That this fact is not more generally appreciated is natural because so few understand Nature.

Human nature, however, we all understand, more or less, and so it is that landscape which expresses the personality of the artist, his feeling, appeals to us all. We enter into it more easily because of the trail he has blazed and we are apt to believe that the view which we get is the finest there is to be had. As a matter of fact the painter, in all probability, chose his course with particular regard for what interested him, and with a very definite idea of expressing himself, in pretty much the same way as the woodsman would cut a trail as directly as might be to a fixed point, with due regard for making it as easy as possible for travel and as pleasant. Few of us are able to really enter into the spirit of a landscape except where a path is beaten for us through the personality of the artist, as few as there are of us who are able to find our way in the virgin forest or the pathless desert. The result of this is that whatever of beauty is visible in landscape art is that which we see through the personalities of the



J. FRANCIS MURPHY. INDIAN SUMMER.

artists, and most of whatever feeling we get out of it is that which they have succeeded in putting into it.

Artists, like the rest of us, are men of temperament, of sentiment, of emotion, of one kind or another, and they generally succeed in expressing it in their work, but that they should express it in a landscape that is as singular as its variations are many, and that serves them, with but few exceptions for a lifetime, is as curious as it is regrettable. A single arrangement, a single picture, as it were, suffices them for the expression of practically every emotion, this is as true of Corot as of Tryon, as true of Daubigny as of Murphy. Their greatness consists rather in doing one kind of landscape superlatively well than in doing many kinds in a manner to mark them as real masterpieces. Their pictures, whether silvery with the morning light, or golden with the after-glow, tremulous with the winds of Summer or carpeted with the fallen leaves, are mostly of one spot or of places very much alike. Atmosphere is the stuff whereof their masterpieces are made, the landscape as it were a mere scaffolding on which are hung their filmy tapestries of shadow and of light. And very beautiful their pictures are too, but with little of the lofty grandeur of nature, no more than a mere suggestion of that

infinite variety of beauty which is all about us in this world in which we live. Looking at one of their pictures and noting its similarity to all the others, one wonders if perhaps that particular landscape is the only one the artist found lovely, only to realize in a moment that even that loveliness in their eyes was probably very much a matter of their success in glorifying it in the atmosphere of their own emotion. Their ability in doing just this sort of thing is prodigious, their mastery of atmosphere marvellous indeed. With anything so subtle, so insubstantial, so elusive, to express so much—for they do express a wide range of feeling—is an accomplishment of considerable importance in itself.

But some of us at times get just a little tired of the artists, their moods, their emotions, the atmosphere of their personalities, and wish for something more of art—pictures with the large, deep feeling of the great out-of-doors in them, landscapes that express the moods of nature, the wistful tenderness of the Spring, the loneliness of the moorlands, the peace of the little hills lying in the sun or the shadowed mystery of the night.

Without forgetting one's self one may never hope to win one's way to Nature's heart, to really get to know her, to understand her well enough to even begin to express any one of her various moods, and until one can do this he may never hope to do the

best in landscape art, for the greatest pictures of that sort are those that express her, her moods, not the feelings, the personalities of artists.

THE END

FIVE HUNDRED COPIES PRINTED DURING
THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER MCMXVII

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



140 874

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY